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SUBJECT: MOROCCO'S 2006-2007 INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS
CONTROL STRATEGY REPORT (INCSR) PART 1, DRUGS AND CHEMICAL
CONTROLS

REF: STATE 154898

I. Summary

11. Morocco achieved significant reductions in cannabis production and cultivation, although it remains one of the world's major producers and exporters of cannabis. According to the Agency for the Promotion of Economic and Social Development of the Northern Prefectures and Provinces of the Kingdom of Morocco (APDN), Morocco produced an estimated 53,400 metric tons (MT) of cannabis in 2005, representing a significant decrease from 2004 when it produced 98,000 MT. According to the 2005 combined study on cannabis conducted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Morocco's (APDN), Morocco's gross cannabis production in 2005 provided for potential cannabis resin (hashish) production of 1,067 MT the study noted. According to the UNODC report, Morocco in 2005 succeeded in decreasing by 40 percent its land dedicated to cannabis cultivation to 72,500 hectares, down from 120,500 hectares in 2004, due in part to an aggressive Government of Morocco (GOM) eradication campaign. The UNODC study also states that approximately 800,000 Moroccans (2.5 percent of the country's estimated 2004 population) were involved in cannabis cultivation. Morocco's efforts to combat cannabis cultivation are made more difficult by limited short-term alternatives for those involved in its production. Available information continues to indicate the United States is not a major recipient of drugs from Morocco. Morocco is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention.

12. In 2006, the GOM in addition to its efforts against production, acted against drug-related corruption. In September, a GOM investigation into the network of a major drug baron arrested in the north resulted in the arrest of more than a dozen high-ranking government, judicial, military, and law enforcement officials linked to narcotics-related corruption.

II. Status of Country

13. Morocco consistently ranks among the world's largest producers and exporters of cannabis, and its cultivation and sale provide the economic base for much of the mountainous northern region of Morocco. Only very small amounts of

narcotics produced in or transiting through Morocco reach the United States. According to a 2005 UNODC report, the illicit trade in Moroccan cannabis resin generates approximately \$13 billion a year in total revenues, but Morocco retains only a small share (approximately \$325 million) of total turnover from the cannabis trade. Independent estimates indicate that the returns from cannabis cultivation range from \$16,400-\$29,800 per hectare (little of which goes to the growers themselves), compared with an average of \$1,000 per hectare for one possible alternative, corn. EU law enforcement officials report that Moroccan cannabis is typically processed into cannabis resin or oil and exported predominately to Europe, as well as Algeria, and Tunisia. To date, Morocco has no enterprises that use dual-use precursor chemicals, and is thus neither a source nor transit point for them. While there continues to be a small but growing domestic market for harder drugs like heroin and cocaine, cannabis remains the most widely used illicit drug in Morocco. There is no substantial evidence of widespread trafficking in heroin or cocaine, but press reports suggest Latin American cocaine traffickers may have started using well-established cannabis smuggling routes to move cocaine into Europe.

III. Country Actions Against Drugs

14. Policy Initiatives: The GOM's partnership with UNODC in conducting cannabis surveys the past three years (2005, 2004, 2003) reflects Morocco's growing desire to compile accurate data on narcotics production and address its narcotics problem. Morocco is one of the only countries to publish scientific estimates of cannabis cultivation within its borders. In 2004, Morocco launched an awareness campaign for cannabis growers alerting them to the adverse effects of

cannabis cultivation for the land and informing them of alternatives to use the land more productively.

15. Throughout the 1980's, the GOM worked in conjunction with the UN to devise a response to the unique geographic, cultural and economic circumstances that confront the many people involved in the cultivation of cannabis in northern Morocco. Joint projects to encourage cultivation of alternative agricultural products included providing goats for dairy farming, apple trees, and small bee-keeping initiatives. This effort also included paved roads, modern irrigation networks, and health and veterinary clinics. In the 1990's, the GOM continued to focus on development alternatives in Morocco's northern provinces through the work of APDN and the Tangier Mediterranean Special Agency (TMSA). In June 2003, TMSA oversaw the groundbreaking of the centerpiece of its northern development program, the Tanger-MED port, which is set to become Morocco's primary maritime gateway to the world. To study the viability of medicinal plant substitution the GOM selected Taounate, a cannabis producing province, as the site for the construction of the National Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (INPMA).

16. Law Enforcement Efforts: According to government statistics, Morocco in 2005 seized 116 tons of cannabis, down from the previous year's total of 318 tons. Seizures, however, were up for cocaine, heroin, and psychoactive drugs during the same period.

17. Since 1995, the GOM reports it has detailed up to 10,000 police personnel into the North and Rif mountains to interdict drug traffic and to maintain narcotics checkpoints, rotating personnel approximately every six months. Moroccan forces also staff observation posts along the Mediterranean coast, and the Moroccan Navy carries out routine sea patrols and responds to information developed by the observation posts. These efforts, however, have not changed the underlying reality of extensive cannabis cultivation and trafficking in northern Morocco. Morocco and France agreed in 2004 to reinforce bilateral counternarcotics cooperation by deploying liaison officers to Tangiers and France. During

the past several years, according to both Moroccan and French police sources, controlled deliveries of drugs has proven to be a very successful interdiction technique.

¶18. The GOM in 2005 destroyed more than 7,000 hectares of cannabis, primarily in Larache and Taounate Provinces. As part of its 2006 eradication campaign, which targeted more than 15,000 hectares, the GOM claims to have completely eliminated cannabis production in Larache province. Morocco has laws providing a maximum allowable prison sentence for drug offenses of 30 years, as well as fines for narcotics violations ranging from \$20,000-\$80,000. Ten to fifteen years' imprisonment remains the typical sentence for major drug traffickers convicted in Morocco. In 2004, Morocco claims to have arrested 22,526 Moroccan nationals and 356 foreigners in connection with drug-related offenses.

¶19. Corruption: The GOM does not promote drug production or trafficking as a matter of policy. In September, a GOM investigation into the network of a major drug baron resulted in the arrest of more than a dozen high-ranking government, judicial, military, and law enforcement officials linked to narcotics-related corruption, including a senior security official and former chief of police in Tangier. This investigation, as part of a larger government effort to combat corruption, led to further high-level shake ups in the law enforcement community, as well as the detention of other alleged drug traffickers. Although this investigation continues, the trials of some of the arrested individuals were moving forward. Morocco has signed, but has not yet ratified, the UN Convention Against Corruption.

¶10. Agreements and Treaties: Morocco is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention, the 1971 UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances and the 1961 UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, as amended by the 1972 Protocol. Morocco is a party to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized

Crime.

¶11. Cultivation/Production: The center of cannabis production continues to be the province of Chefchaouen, where 56 percent of Morocco's cannabis is cultivated. Production, however, has expanded north in the last two decades to the outskirts of Tangiers and east toward Al Hoceima. According to the UNODC report, small farmers in the northern Rif region grow mostly cannabis, where an estimated 27 percent of arable land is dedicated to its cultivation. Production also occurs on a smaller scale in the Souss valley in the south. The 2005 UNODC survey found that 75 percent of villages and 96,000 farms in the Rif region cultivate cannabis, representing 6.5 percent of all farms in Morocco.

¶12. The GOM has stated its commitment to the total eradication of cannabis production, but given the economic and historical dependence on cannabis in the northern region, eradication is only feasible if accompanied by a well-designed development strategy involving reform of local government and a highly subsidized crop substitution program. Moroccan drug officials have indicated that crop substitution programs thus far appear to have made little headway in providing economic alternatives to cannabis production. An UNODC report warned that this agricultural monoculture represents an extreme danger to the ecosystem due to the extensive use of fertilizers. Moreover, forest removal continues to be the method of choice to make room for cannabis cultivation.

¶13. Drug Flow/Transit: The primary ports of export for Moroccan cannabis are Oued Lalou, Martil and Bou Ahmed on the Mediterranean coast. Most large shipments bound for Spain travel via fishing vessels or private yachts. Smaller &zodiac8 speedboats, which can make roundtrips to Spain in one hour, are reportedly being used to transport drugs. Drug shipments of up to two tons have been seized on these boats. Smugglers also continue to transport cannabis via truck and car through the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, and

the Moroccan port of Tangiers, crossing the Straits of Gibraltar by ferry. According to the UNODC, Spain still accounts for the world's largest portion of cannabis resin seizures (54 percent of global seizures in 2004). The Moroccan press reported that some 800 tons of Moroccan cannabis resin were seized in Spain in 2004. Given its proximity to Morocco, Spain is a key transfer point for Europe-bound Moroccan cannabis resin. Due to the Schengen zone, once contraband reaches Spain it can pass unchecked to most of Western Europe.

¶14. Domestic Programs: The GOM is concerned about signs of an increase in domestic heroin and cocaine use, but does not aggressively promote reduction in domestic demand for these drugs or for cannabis. It has established a program to train the staffs of psychiatric hospitals in the treatment of drug addiction. In partnership with UNODC, the Ministry of Health is exploring the relationship between drug use and HIV/AIDS infection in Morocco. Moroccan civil society and some schools are active in promoting counter-narcotics use campaigns.

IV. U.S. Policy Initiatives and Programs

¶15. U.S. Policy Initiatives: U.S. policy goals in Morocco are to enhance Morocco's counter narcotics capability through training in law enforcement techniques and to promote the GOM's adherence to its obligations under relevant bilateral and international agreements. U.S.-supported efforts to strengthen anti-money laundering laws and efforts against terrorist financing may also contribute to the GOM's ability to monitor the flow of money from the cannabis trade.

¶16. Bilateral Cooperation: According to Moroccan narcotics officials, USG-provided border security equipment, particularly new scanners in main ports, improved the effectiveness of security measures at entry points, which directly contributed to increased drug seizures in 2004. Morocco and the U.S. have also begun to expand cooperation on drug investigations of mutual interest. The Drug Enforcement

Administration (DEA), which covers Morocco from its Paris office, has enhanced its engagement with the Moroccan National Police, including discussing ways to increase training visits to the US by Moroccan narcotics officials and by US officials to Morocco. In September 2005, the U.S. Coast Guard sent a Mobile Training Team to provide training in maritime law enforcement boarding procedures.

¶17. Road Ahead: The United States will continue to monitor the narcotics situation in Morocco, cooperate with the GOM in its counter-narcotics efforts, and, together with the EU, provide law enforcement training, intelligence, and other support where possible.

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